



DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LT. GOVERNOR

KEVIN M. BURKE  
SECRETARY

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Executive Office of Public Safety and Security*  
*Department of Fire Services*

*P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road*

*Stow, Massachusetts 01775*

*(978) 567~3100 Fax: (978) 567~3121*



STEPHEN D. COAN  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THOMAS P. LEONARD  
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

For Immediate Release: January 17, 2008  
Contact: Jennifer Mieth (978) 567-3381

**State Fire Marshal Coan Announces Burn Awareness Week**  
**February 3-9, 2008**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "Because gasoline is so commonly used for fueling the engines of our cars, lawnmowers and other outdoor machinery, many people often forget that gasoline can be dangerous and precautions need to be made to prevent injury." He added, "Burn Awareness Week is a great time to remind ourselves of the proper uses of gasoline as well necessary safety measures we can utilize to keep our families as safe as possible." Burn Awareness Week is February 3-9, 2008.

According to the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System (M-BIRS), which by law collects injury reports on all burns affecting 5% or more of the entire body surface area, 11% of the burn injuries reported were caused by gasoline. One third of these victims were between the ages of 15 and 24. "In 2006, the 15-24 year old age group saw an increased risk of suffering burns from gasoline-related incidents. We need to remember that gasoline is a dangerous tool and should always be handled responsibly," said Coan.

Coan offered these safety tips:

- If you must store gasoline, store it outside the home in approved safety cans away from open flames (i.e. water heaters and pilot lights) and out of reach of children.
- Never regularly carry gasoline in your trunk. A one-gallon approved container could be carried empty and be used only for emergencies.
- Only fill small engines when they are completely cool; gasoline vapors can ignite when an engine is turned off but still warm
- Never allow children to handle gasoline, even if under adult supervision.

Although the theme of this year's Burn Awareness Week is "Preventing Gasoline Burns", it is important to note that the leading cause of burns in Massachusetts is hot liquid scalds. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of all burn injuries reported to M-BIRS were hot liquid scalds because of a cooking related incident and 47% of these victims are children under the age of 5. Remember to keep children away from the cooking area in a safe zone and turn pot

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handles inward to avoid knocking them over. There should be a no zone near the stove to protect them from cooking liquids, grease or hot metal.

**Burn First Aid**

If someone does suffer a burn, the most important thing is to get the fire out. “Teach children to stop, drop and roll and remind older children and adults they can still do it even in a tight space, by rocking back and forth until the flames are out,” said Coan. “Cool a burn with cool water, don’t use ice or butter or ointment which can make the burn worse, and be sure to call 9-1-1 for medical help for all but the most minor burns,” he added.

**More Information**

For more information on burn safety, information is available on line at:

[www.mass.gov/dfs/](http://www.mass.gov/dfs/) and click on burn safety

[www.burnawarenessweek.org](http://www.burnawarenessweek.org)

<http://www.ameriburn.org/Preven/Prevention.htm>

or call your local fire department or hospital.